Costings Briefing

# Business case for installing male sanitary bins

**October 2023**

**Is male incontinence an issue?**

Male incontinence is not talked about enough and as a result is not recognised as being an issue. The below statistics demonstrate how many men experience urinary and bowel incontinence and so therefore, need direct access to sanitary waste disposal in male toilets.

1. **1 in 25 men aged over 40** will experience some form of urinary leakage every year in the UK1.
2. **1 in 20 UK men aged 60** and over suffer from bowel incontinence2.

**What workplaces have told us**

Prostate Cancer UK surveyed 62 workplaces nationally and 84 men who are incontinent, to understand the scope of the problem and have detailed our findings in the report *Lifting the lid on male incontinence*3. The main two barriers that workplaces cited for not having provision was the lack of legislation in place and a lack of awareness of the issue.

Embarrassed, stressed and isolated are three words used by a man to describe his experience of incontinence post treatment for his prostate cancer.

It’s time to do something for men to address this.

**Cost**

We have spoken with some workplaces who have brought in bins to get an understanding of the cost to implementation. We can state that the range of bringing in bins is between £9-12 depending on the supplier.

The below is an approximate indication of the cost of collection and replacement of sanitary bins per month and per annum.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Workplace** | **Number of bins** | **Cost per month** | **Total cost per annum** |
| Council | 14  1 | £126  £9 | £1,512  £108 |
| Shopping centre | 3  1 | £9.72  3.24 | £350  £38.88 |
| International airport | 50  1 | £122.40  2.44 | £6,120  £29.28 |
| **Range of cost** | **1** | **£2.44 - £9** | **£29- £108** |

The above costings have been provided to Prostate Cancer UK from a range of providers. It is clear that the costs can range depending on number of bins in place. Based on the above, the costs for very small businesses is affordable businesses as the cost of 1 bin would range between £29-£108 p.a. It is fair to say that this cost is nominal and that weighed against the benefit of providing such a service to men, by the demonstrable impact, for local economies, businesses, workplaces, reducing social isolation, loneliness, physical and mental health consequences.

The below has been adapted from the table found at Section 199 of the ***Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 Approved Code of Practice and guidance Regulations 21, Washing facilities***\*10  to reflect the number of male staff in a workplace, the guidance for recommended number of cubicles per quota of men, a recommendation of the number of sanitary bins and what the cost would be to install bins.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of men at work | Number of cubicles | Proposed number of bins | Approximate cost p.a. |
| 1-15\* a | 1 | 1 | **£29- £108** |
| 16-30\*a | 2 | 1 | **£29- £108** |
| 31-45\*a | 2 | 1-2 | **£29- £108 / £58-£216** |
| 46-60 \*a | 3 | 2-3 | **£58-£216 / £87-£324** |
| 61-75\*a | 3 | 3 | **£87 - £324** |
| 76-90\*a | 4 | 3 | **£87-£324** |
| 91-100\*a | 4 | 4 | **£116 -432** |

\*a We would recommend the use of a hygiene provider for two reasons. Firstly, practically speaking, one will be instructed for the removal of female sanitary bins and so the transition to implementing a service for men’s toilets, should be straightforward. Secondly, a hygiene provider has the resource to be able to safely and easily dispose of sanitary waste so that it does not end up in landfill, thus providing an environmentally sound benefit.

**Return on investment**

We explored the issue of cost of installing bins to businesses. To understand this, we wanted to know what the cost of unblocking toilets was annually, as we were aware that “unflushable” products like incontinence pads, are being flushed down the toilet, creating blockages and other issues such as “fatbergs”.

We found that:

* 1 in 5 workplaces were paying to unblock men’s toilets. The remaining responses were unable to estimate the cost of maintenance at the time of completing the survey.\*3
* **1 in 3 estimated that the cost of maintenance and unblocking of toilets was up to £5,000 p.a.** \*3

Research\*4 has shown how various sectors lose money each month by not being accessible. A breakdown of sectors is below:

* **High Street Shops – £267 million**
* **Restaurants/Pubs/Clubs – £163 million**
* **Supermarkets – £501 million**
* **Energy Companies – £44 million**
* **Phone/Internet Providers – £49 million**
* **Transport Providers – £42 million**
* **Banks or Building Societies – £935 million**

The International Longevity Centre’s research [Maximising the Longevity Dividend](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/A8gVC4kX2CAWEPfWQrZv?domain=ilcuk.org.uk/)\*5 published in 2020, revealed that older consumers **spent £319 billion (54% of all UK consumer spending)** in 2018 – increasing to £550 billion (or 63p of every pound spent by consumers) by 2040.

“For our **high streets to survive, they must become more inclusive**.Inclusive environments are often a cost-effective way to prevent worsening health among an ageing population”. David Sinclair, Director International Longevity Centre.

The economic impact of introducing provision for men, would be significant for local businesses , the economy and tourism as more men become activated to go out and feel confident to spend more time out of the home as they know that there is a toilet nearby that will have a sanitary bin.

Research conducted by phs Group and Prostate Cancer UK in *Dispose with Dignity* \*6published in February 2023, surveyed 500 men and found that 7 out of 10 of them stated that they would be more likely to use a restaurant or business if they knew it was supporting a scheme for the provision of male incontinence bins or incontinence products in washrooms.

Leader of Winchester Council, Martin Tod, in a thought piece within the Local Government Association First magazine\*7 said about their recent implementation:

“It can... cause cost and maintenance problems for toilet facilities if incontinence products are flushed, rather than properly dealt with – so offering a discreet way to dispose of them makes a lot of sense.

**Providing a solution is…relatively cheap and easy** – which is never a bad thing when our finances are under such pressure. The visitor economy is very important to our district”.

It should also be considered that the cost to businesses towards implementation, will ultimately contribute towards savings to the environment, plastics being disposed in a safe way.

“The water sector spends millions clearing blockages from our sewers and trying to educate around the 3Ps and unflushables. If we want to prevent unflushables entering our sewage network then getting this legislation changed so that everyone has access to a bin (and doesn’t use the toilet as an alternative) is fundamental.” Lydia Dareheath, Public Affairs Manager, Anglian Water.\*8

It is fair to conclude that the cost to businesses will ultimately be negligible, when considered against the benefit that they will reap from increased footfall to their premises, recognising the needs of men – therefore valuing their customer/staff base and making a positive impact upon the environment.

**Health:** We spoke to men who incontinent or wore stoma bags and found that:

* **1 in 4** said that they will only go out to places where they know there is provision of a sanitary bin.3
* 44% of men stating that they **now reduce the amount of time** they’re away from home due to their incontinence\*3.
* There is strong evidence to demonstrate that **loneliness and social isolation** is a social problem and denotes a significant health burden. \*9
* Men are wearing their pads for longer than they want to as they can’t dispose of them, resulting in **sores, rashes, fungal infections and urinary tract infections**.
* Men are carrying sanitary waste with them and some are disposing of it in public waste bins – creating unintentional public health concerns of smell, health and safety issues for those emptying bins, and for men transporting sanitary waste.

It’s incredibly important to address these health and social care issues and to sensibly balance the cost implications of installation with the heavy cost to men, to the NHS and to the economy.

**Legislative change**

There is a requirement for toilets used by women to have bins set out in the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice and Guidance which accompanies the **Workplace Health and Safety Regs 1992**. \*11.  This needs revising to include male and female toilets.

Outside of this best practice should be encouraged, seeking a wider or blanket mandatory requirement. We advocate that this would need a different approach and risk assessment/consultation as it could potentially have unintended consequences.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require in Section 20 that:

20. (1) Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences shall be provided at readily accessible places…

And that:

20. (2)(b): they arnd the rooms containing them are kept in a clean and orderly condition…

The Approved Code of Practice and Guidance published by the Health and Safety Executive by the authority of the Secretary of State requires:

192: Toilets should be connected to a suitable draning system and have an effective means for flushing with water. Toilet paper should be provided in a holder or dispenser. A coat hook should also be provided. In toilets used by ***women***, suitable means for the disposal of sanitary dressings should be provided.

We ask for the removal of women ***so that a suitable means for the disposal of sanitary waste should be provided.***

**Conclusion:**

We are proposing a pragmatic and easy to implement solution which would be of a benefit to thousands of men nationally. There is of course, a cost attached to implementation, however, we have demonstrated that the cost to businesses to implement this change is low, will have nominal impact on budgets and indeed, and will for a number of sectors be of significant economic benefit as more men come out and spend time and money in those work/places.

* The cost to introduce is nominal.
* The economic and environmental argument for implementation is strong.
* The health and social care need has been demonstrated
* We advocate that it’s the right thing for men, who may have prostate cancer, are termina or other significant long term conditionsl, are isolating themselves and should have better quality lives.
* It’s simply time for change.

**Questions and contact**

If you have any questions about the contents of this document please contact: [lubna.latifcurtis@prostatecanceruk.org](mailto:lubna.latifcurtis@prostatecanceruk.org)

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